

[TELL A FRIEND](#) **MAR. 04 2010 Weekly Edition**[Home](#)[Art & Entertainment](#)[Obituaries](#)[Bulletin](#)[Mailbox](#)[Classifieds](#)[Archives](#)[Advertising](#)[Cc](#)**Staggering Cuts Ahead For Livermore Schools**

By Patricia Koning

Livermore School Board members began discussing an exhaustive list of budget cuts totaling nearly \$10 million at last Tuesday's meeting. The trustees need to take action to reduce the budget for the 2010/11 school year by \$8.8 million by mid-March.

"It's no surprise that California is in a fiscal crisis. It rolls down to us, so we're in a fiscal crisis too," said Susan Kinder, executive director of fiscal services. "In four years, we will have cut \$26.5 million from our budget, a staggering amount."

The public is invited to voice opinions on the budget cuts at a series of community forums next week: Feb. 8 at Christensen Middle School, Feb. 9 at East Avenue Middle School, Feb. 10 at Mendenhall Middle School, and Feb. 11 at Junction Avenue Middle School. All of the meetings will begin at 7 pm.

In the 2008/09 school year, the trustees cut \$5.2 million. In 09/10 it was \$8 million, broken down into \$3.8 million of ongoing and \$4.3 million of one-time money. Kinder said that to keep the budget in balance, the trustees need to cut \$8.8 million in 10/11 and \$4.5 million in 11/12. For the coming school year, she proposed \$5.3 million in ongoing cuts and \$3.5 million in one-time cuts.

Included in the one-time money is \$1 million that was set aside to account for inflation to the cost of projects funded by the original parcel tax, which ends this year, and \$1 million in special education stimulus funding. The Livermore School District received approximately \$2.5 million in stimulus funding for special education. However, only \$1 million can be used in the general fund.

Most of the budget cuts that the trustees reviewed last week were on a list that interim superintendent Mike Martinez presented in October, when it appeared that the District had a shortfall of about \$6 million. The Governor's January budget proposal brought that number up to \$8.8 million.

Cancelling three professional development days for teachers will save the District \$693,500. The grant that paid for those days, called the Staff Development Buy Back Day Program, Senate Bill 1193, is no longer in existence. This will shorten the teacher work year by three days, but will not impact the number of days that students spend in school.

Martinez also proposed eliminating all funding for adult education for a savings of \$575,000. A few federally funded programs, such as some English as a Second Language classes, would remain. "This would essentially wipe out adult education," said Kinder.

Livermore's adult education is 85 years old and serves over 6,000 students each year. The most popular programs are English as a Second Language and Career Technical Education.

The list also calls for the elimination of two high school clerical positions, two middle school clerical positions (which will be accomplished by reducing four positions by 50%), \$300,000 from the summer school program, and 10% from the School and Library Improvement Program (SLIP) funds at all levels.

Other budget cuts, which were on the original list, include consolidating Portola Elementary School at Junction Avenue Middle School, raising class sizes, reducing hours for librarians and technology specialists, ending the grade 5 music program, and eliminating District funding for high school athletics. One vice principal at each comprehensive high school would be eliminated, along with staff in the business services, human resources, student services, and special education departments.

The complete list is in the agenda for the Jan. 26 Board of Education meeting, which can be found on www.livermoreschools.com in the School Board section.

"We have nowhere to go but to bring down significant personnel costs," said Board president Stu Gary. "We have no reason to expect things to get better in the next two years. Every cut on this list will eventually happen."

Martinez estimates that the budget cuts could result in layoffs of about 70 District employees, including teachers, clerical staff, support staff, maintenance staff, and management.

The trustees also discussed a letter that was distributed to the community this week. "If we want the type of education we think our children deserve, then we need to take this on as a community to ensure that it is not the bare minimum," said Gary.

Once again, the Livermore School District is turning to a dollar-a-day program to offset some of the budget cuts, this time asking for donations from the entire community. "During these difficult times not all parents can afford this for each of their students," the letter reads. "We need support from all of Livermore, not just parents of children now in our schools. To provide the education we remember, we are asking the entire community to 'adopt a student' for a

year through a \$365 donation.”

The goal of the campaign is to raise \$3 million to offset the additional \$3 million in lost revenue that resulted from the Governor’s January budget proposal. The trustees suggest making donations through the Livermore Valley Education Foundation (LVEF), the Boosters at Livermore and Granada High Schools, and school-based parent teacher associations.

The next regular school board meeting is on Feb. 16 at 7 pm. A special budget workshop school board meeting will be held on Feb. 22 from 11 am to 1 pm.

The trustees will likely take action on the budget cuts at the March 2 Board of Education meeting, as preliminary layoff notices for certificated staff need to be issued by March 15.

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